AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1–22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) A method of detecting human low-molecular-weight CD14 ~~without detecting human high-molecular-weight CD14~~ in a specimen, which comprises:

~~binding said human low-molecular-weight CD14 with a sandwich immunoassay kit comprising~~ contacting the specimen with:

(a) an antibody that binds to a peptide consisting of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID No:2; and

(b) an antibody that binds to a peptide consisting of the amino acid sequence from [[the]] position ~~of 17th~~ 17 to [[the]] position ~~of 26th~~ 26 of SEQ ID NO:5;

wherein said human ~~low-molecular-weight~~ low-molecular-weight CD14 ~~has the characteristic features as follows~~:

(1) ~~no binding to~~ is not bound by F1025-3-1 (Accession No. FERM BP-7296) antibody,

(2) ~~showing~~ has a peak elution [[in]] at a molecular weight range of 25 to 45 kDa ~~on a~~ as determined by gel filtration chromatography, and

(3) ~~being~~ is obtainable from human ~~plasma~~ blood; and

detecting binding of antibodies (a) and (b) to said human low-molecular-weight CD14, whereby said method can detect low-molecular-weight CD14 without detecting high-molecular-weight CD14.

24. (Currently Amended) A method of detecting human low-molecular-weight CD14 without detecting human high-molecular weight CD14 which comprises:

binding said human ~~low-molecular-weight~~ low-molecular-weight CD14 with ~~a sandwich immunoassay kit comprising:~~

(a) an antibody that binds to a peptide consisting of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2; and

(b) an antibody that competes with an antibody which binds to a peptide consisting of the amino acid sequence from [[the]] position ~~of 17th~~ 17 to [[the]] position ~~of 26th~~ 26 of SEQ ID NO:5;

wherein said human low-molecular weight CD14 ~~has the characteristic features as follows~~:

(1) ~~no binding to~~ is not bound by F1025-3-1 (Accession No. FERM BP-7296) antibody,

(2) ~~showing~~ has a peak of elution [[in]] at a molecular weight range of 25 to 45 kDa on a gel filtration chromatography, and

(3) ~~being~~ is obtainable from human ~~plasma~~ blood; and

detecting binding of antibodies (a) and (b) to said human low-molecular-weight CD14, whereby said method can detect low-molecular-weight CD14 without detecting high-molecular-weight CD14.

25. (Currently Amended) A method for diagnosing sepsis in a patient comprising the steps of:

~~measuring an amount of a~~ detecting human low-molecular weight CD14 in patient blood by contacting patient blood ~~of the patient by~~ with ~~a sandwich immunoassay kit comprising~~:

(a) an antibody that binds to a peptide consisting of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2; and

(b) an antibody that binds to a peptide consisting of the amino acid sequence from [[the]] position ~~of 17~~th 17 to [[the]] position ~~of 26~~th 26 of SEQ ID NO:5;

wherein said human ~~low-molecular-weight~~ low-molecular-weight CD14 ~~has the characteristic features as follows~~:

(1) ~~no binding to~~ is not bound by F1025-3-1 (Accession No. FERM BP-7296) antibody;

(2) ~~showing~~ has a peak of elution [[in]] at a molecular weight range of 25 to 45 kDa ~~on a~~ as determined by gel filtration chromatography, and

(3) ~~being~~ is obtainable from human ~~plasma~~ blood;

measuring in said patient blood the amount of low-molecular-weight CD14 bound to both of the above described antibody (a) and the above described antibody (b), thereby determining the amount of human low-molecular-weight CD14 in said patient blood;

comparing the measured amount of low-molecular-weight CD14 in said patient blood to a standard amount of low-molecular-weight CD14 in a normal individual; and

evaluating whether the measured amount of human low-molecular weight CD14 observed in said patient blood is higher than the standard amount of human low-molecular weight CD14 observed in a normal individual.

26. (Currently Amended) A method for diagnosing sepsis in a patient comprising the steps of:

~~measuring an amount of a~~ detecting human ~~low-molecular-weight~~ low-molecular-weight CD14 in ~~blood of the~~ patient blood by contacting patient blood with a sandwich immunoassay kit ~~comprising~~, wherein said kit comprises:

(a) an antibody that binds to a peptide consisting of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2; and

(b) an antibody that competes with an antibody which binds to a peptide consisting of the amino acid sequence from [[the]] position ~~of 17th~~ 17 to [[the]] position ~~of 26th~~ 26 of SEQ ID NO:5;

wherein said human ~~low-molecular-weight~~ low-molecular-weight CD14 ~~has the characteristic features as follows~~:

(1) ~~no binding to~~ is not bound by F1025-3-1 (Accession No. FERM BP-7296) antibody,

(2) ~~showing~~ has a peak of elution [[in]] at a molecular weight range of 25 to 45 kDa ~~on a~~ as determined by gel filtration chromatography, and

(3) ~~being~~ is obtainable from human ~~plasma~~ blood;

measuring in said patient blood the amount of low-molecular-weight CD14 bound to both of the above described antibody (a) and the above identified (b), thereby determining the amount of human low-molecular-weight CD14 in said patient blood;

comparing the measured amount of low-molecular-weight CD14 observed in said patient blood to a standard amount of low-molecular-weight CD14 present in a normal individual; and

evaluating whether the measured amount of low-molecular-weight CD14 observed in said patient blood is higher than the standard amount of low-molecular-weight CD14 observed in a normal ~~invidivual~~ individual.

27. (New) The method for diagnosing sepsis according to claim 25, wherein in said comparing step, the average +2SD of normal individuals is used as a cut-off level.

28. (New) The method according to claim 23, wherein said detecting binding of antibodies (a) and (b) to said human low-molecular-weight CD14 is by sandwich immunoassay.

29. (New) The method according to claim 24, wherein said detecting binding of antibodies (a) and (b) to said human low-molecular-weight CD14 is by sandwich immunoassay.

30. (New) The method according to claim 25, wherein said detecting binding of antibodies (a) and (b) to said human low-molecular-weight CD14 is by sandwich immunoassay.